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AUTHOR Dillon, Kristine
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ABSTRACT

The disadvantages of faculty participation in outside professional activities that result in extra income are discussed. These activities include: consulting, producing copyrighted and patented works, giving speeches or lectures, and teaching for other institutions and organizations. A significant increase in the amount of outside consulting work done by faculty in recent years is noted. It is suggested that this is due to a growth in the reliance upon colleges and universities to provide expertise that could be applied to social problems. As a result, today's academician is viewed as a sophisticated professional in a variety of business and political arenas. Distrust of the academic profession by its clientele (both students and taxpayers) is cited as a direct consequence of this type of activity since it demands more time away from the institution and teaching responsibilities and often the use of university supplies, materials, facilities, and name. Guidelines employed by various institutions for regulating outside activities are also discussed. Ethical issues underlying this behavior are examined and it is suggested that these widely accepted practices warrant careful reexamination. Increased governmental attention to time-accountability for funded research projects also reflects a growing concern with outside professional activities. It is concluded that conflicts of interest, short-changing of academic duties, and economic self-serving are important issues that should be examined closely so that better relationships can be established between faculty and their various clienteles. (SF)

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OUTSIDE PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

by

Kristine Dillon

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It is generally acknowledged that faculty whose areas of expertise have direct applicability to business, industry, or government concerns may not only contribute to the advancement of these nonacademic agencies but in doing so contribute to the fulfillment of university objectives as well. Faculty members with consultancies in business or high-technology industries undoubtedly do find that their activities help them stay abreast of the "real world" developments and needs in their respective fields. Their affiliations with outside organizations may also result in employment oppontunities for their students. In a time when higher education is faulted for its lack of practical career relevance and its unresponsiveness to societal needs, it may seem that faculty consulting activities should be applauded as both relevant and responsive.

From the perspective of those concerned with the university budget, the opportunity for faculty in certain disciplines to obtain consultancies -- or for others to earn book and patent royalties -- has helped to ease the concern about low salaries that has plagued higher education since the end of the "golden" 1960s. Belief that academe will no longer be able to attract and retain the best and brightest graduates from disciplines in demand by business and industry has lent much support to the following argument: lucrative consulting arrangements should be encouraged for they help offset salary disparities, at least for the more "marketable" faculty members.

Given all of these benefits of outside professional activities, it may seem curious that our research project and even this conference have come into existence. Without questioning the validity of the perceptions on the parts of consultants and both their academic and outside employers regarding the three benefits I have mentioned (professional relevance, student placement, and salary improvement), I think it is important to assess some of the negative impressions of the practice of outside activities for pay.

Today the value of academic expertise provided on a fee-for-service basis is viewed with some skepticism and the motives behind such activities are being questioned. The reasons for an attitudinal shift on the parts of the public,

elected goverment officials, and university administrators may be traced to a complicated range of social developments. Admittedly, many of these may have had little to do with the behavior of most faculty, and the mistrust of these constituencies is perhaps not entirely warranted. However, it must also be said that faculty have, following the rapid growth in support for higher education in the 1960s, emerged in the public eye as no longer the underpaid scholars whose commitments to academe are made with some measure of personal sacrifice.

To provide a possible reason for this change in public attitude, perhaps we should look for changes in the level of faculty activity beyond the university. Outside professional activities which result in extra income for faculty include among others, consulting, producing copyrighted and patented works, giving speeches or lectures, and teaching for other institutions and organizations. Examining trends in faculty consulting, which is probably the most visible of these activities from the public's (and the media's) viewpoint, Figure 1 shows that there has been a growth in the activity. Information on faculty consulting was collected by the 1975 Ladd-Lipset survey (discussed yesterday by Herbert Marsh) and also by an earlier study by Dunham and others (1966) for academic year 1962. It is clear that the percentage of those who reported that they received consulting fees grew markedly between the academic years 1962 and 1975. If 35% more faculty at four-year colleges and universities now consult for pay than did 15 years ago, it is no wonder that faculty consulting is more visible to the public eye. The public's perception of faculty as active, fee-for-service professionals must be linked with this apparent increase in consulting activity, and the increase is probably related to a change in the role of the university and its faculty that occurred during the 1960s.

During the height of public support for higher education there was a growth in the reliance upon the academy for expertise to be applied to societal problems. The professor was increasingly called upon to provide needed expert advice and assistance. The current academic professional has thus moved into a more active role in society than he (or she) previously held. As a result, today's academician is seen as a much more sophisticated

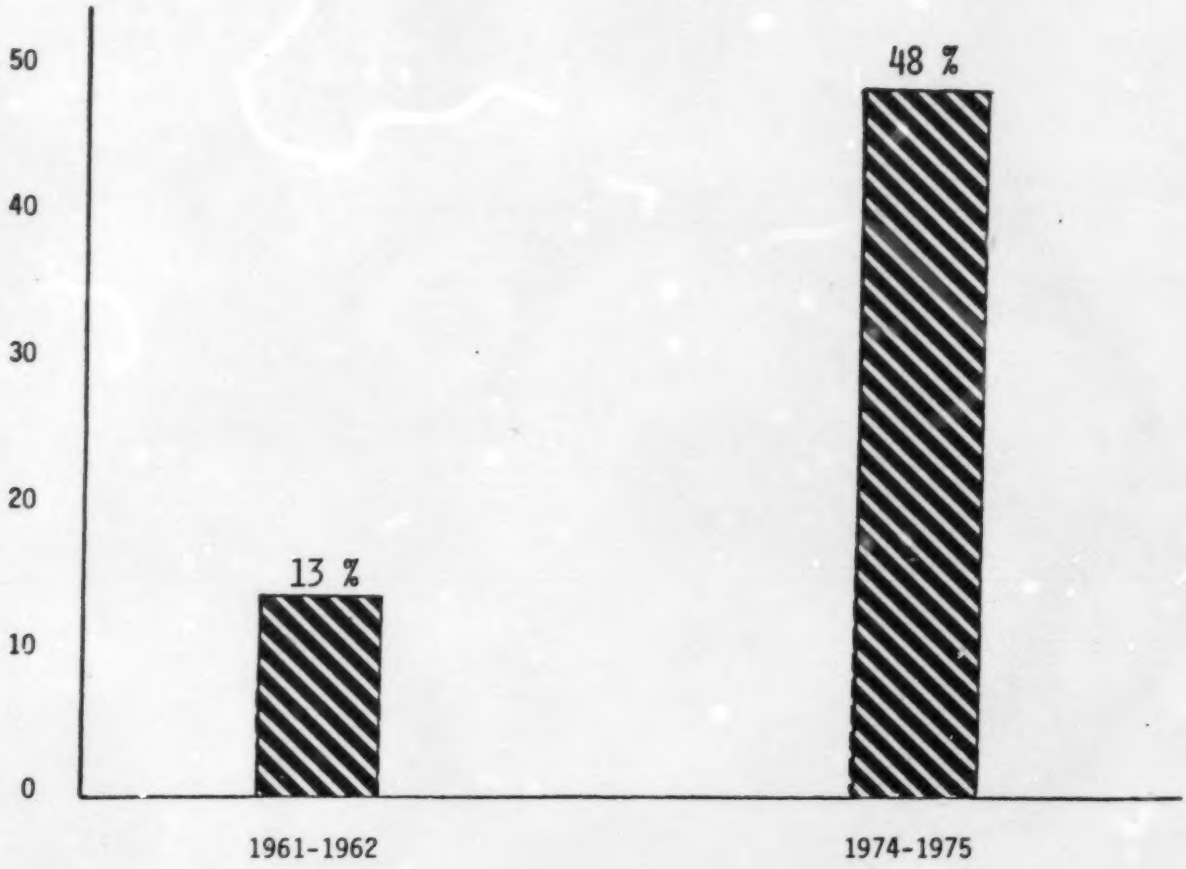

Figure 1. Percent of faculty at four-year colleges and universities who received consulting fees.

Source: Marsh (1979) and Dunham and others (1966)

professional. Leaders from a variety of business and political arenas depend upon academic talents to contribute to a wide range of decisions that affect society. Frequently this academic expertise is the most advanced knowledge currently available.

However, the image of those providing academic expertise has not remained untarnished. Increasingly, it appears that the public sees the academician much as it sees the physician. Academic skills are needed by a society which relies heavily upon the application of scientific knowledge. However, as in the case of the physician, society has become dubious that the academic professional can act in the best interests of the clientele served when no monitoring of professional activity is influenced by that clientele. For the academician, the clientele served may be a number of groups of people. One set of clients is obviously students and those who pay their fees, who may feel that a faculty member's outside activities take too much time from regular teaching or other university responsibilities. Another clientele is composed of general taxpayers who may believe that--in the case of the public universities--they contribute to a full-time salary for professors, and thus resent the realization that faculty can and do earn additional income for time spent working as consultants for industry or government agencies, running their own professionally-related businesses, or teaching elsewhere. These clients are beginning to evidence their dissatisfaction with such arrangements in part through their unwillingness to maintain as high a level of public support for universities. (This reaction is hardly less relevant for the large private universities whose financial stability is largely dependent on public funds and tax laws.) It is difficult for such a clientele to view such outside professional activities in the context of public service and professional development.

The increasing demand for academic expertise creates a multitude of opportunities for ethical problems to arise. Most of these problems relating to consulting and other outside activities stem from the fact that it is difficult, if not impossible, for faculty to earn supplemental income without using university resources in some way. Such things as faculty time, university supplies and materials, campus facilities, and use of the

university's name must be viewed as economically measurable resources. While cases involving the blatant use or abuse of these resources may readily fit our concept of unethical behavior, the cases in which ethical dilemmas arise in a more subtle way are also important for us to consider because if government and public attitudes follow current trends, sweeping policies will undoubtedly be developed to remedy these situations. These policies are as unlikely to achieve their desired effect in the form they are likely to take as they are likely to be developed unless faculty members perceive that there is some basis for concern and realize the importance of renewing some of the traditional ideals of the academic profession. As Henry Clark and his panel have pointed out,it is not just the obvious--and less widespread--income-producing activities that arouse concern. Practices which have become widely accepted within the modern concept of the academic profession also warrant re-examination.

By design, academics have been afforded a large measure of self-determination in the use of time for which they receive compensation. This discretionary use of time is a part of the faculty role definition because the results of professional autonomy in the academic sphere are assumed ultimately to benefit society. However, to many observers it appears that the availability of income-producing commitments, as opposed to relevant unpaid activities, may result in faculty who choose to spend time on what pays and not necessarily on that which is of highest academic priority. Commitment to income-producing activities may lead to unconscious compromise of academic objectivity and impartiality. In such cases, the element of personal financial profit can conceivably influence both time usage and objectivity. Reversing this logic, if the aspects of these activities which lead to personal gain were removed, it seems much less likely that faculty ethics would be questioned.

In addition to the need for increased faculty awareness of ethical problems, universities and external funding bodies must remember that outside professional activities are not inherently detrimental to higher education. Consulting and other activities continue to make substantial contributions to both the university and society. However, current

university practices create conflicts in terms of how faculty incorporate outside commitments within their overall professional activities. Universities employing academic professionals are beginning to recognize problems with a role definition for faculty that includes provision of tenured job security yet little stipulation of what a full-time appointment really entails. Responses to a recent survey of graduate deans at all Research and Doctorate-Granting Universities reveal that universities generally perceive their faculty members as having a range of professional opportunities external to the university. It is clear from policy language that most are concerned that these outside activities might infringe on academic responsibilities. Policies for consulting and/or conflict-of-interest have been developed by 92 of the 95 responding universities. Table 1 presents a listing of those policy elements most frequently included.

The two elements most frequently cited in university policies are the requirement of written application for the approval of a designated administator (i.e., department chair, dean) and the limitation of time to be spent in the consulting activity. This latter stipulation has been the source of some debate when the policy stipulates one day per week for consulting. Does this mean one day out of five (a presumed work week) or one out of seven (a calendar week)? Such debates have resulted in policy revisions in at least a few universities in recent years.

In addition to limitations on time, 55% of the universities specify that consulting activities should not interfere with regular university duties. Forty percent of the policies indicate that university supplies, materials, and in some cases facilities either may not be used or are to be minimally used and sometimes reimbursement for such use is required. About the same proportion of policies require an annual disclosure of consulting affiliation to be placed on file, and in some cases a salary disclosure is part of this requirement. Only a third or fewer of the policies specify the following: the activity should enhance professional abilities, outside teaching is forbidden, the university's name must not be used when serving as a consultant.

Clearly, at least some universities are sensitive to the problems created by a role definition for academics that has allowed and even encouraged

Table 1. Most frequently cited elements in university consulting and conflict-of interest policies.

Formal approval is required	71%
Time limitations are stipulated	70%
Activities may not interfere	55%
Constraints are placed on facilities/materials	40%
Disclosure is required	38%
Activity should enhance professional ability	33%
Outside teaching is not allowed	29%
University name may not be used	23%

N = 92 universities

Source: University Policy Survey, Ethical and Economic Issues Project (Dillon, 1978)

faculty to engage in outside professional activities. It may be observed that these activities can compete not only for time the university believes is included within its expectation of a "full-time" appointment but that they are also likely to compete with or benefit from existing university programs.

In addition to this apparent university attention to outside professional activities of faculty, there is evidence of government concern about activities that supplement faculty incomes and/or involve time that appears already to be salaried time. Although the provision has apparently been dropped for fiscal year 1980 by the HUD-Independent Agencies Subcommittee, the recent pay limitation which resulted in a proportional equivalent of the maximum Federal General Schedule grade salary (GS-18) for faculty supported by NSF grants was an example of the government's perception that university income is probably not accurately represented by base institutional salary figures. The government, and increasingly, the general public believe that faculty earnings from outside activities are substantial contributors to total academic earnings. In fact, the government in this case seems to fear that it has been contributing to the inflation of academic earnings with respect to comparable government and industry employees. Increased governmental attention to time accountablility, reflected in such requirements as "monitored workloads" and "personnel activity reports" for funded research projects are also at least partially related to the suspicicion that outside activities may be taking significantly measurable amounts of faculty time. The government's concern is that such time may be resulting in a short-changing of effort devoted to research projects funded by public monies. Previously, the assumption was that total faculty time was devoted predominantly to university responsibilities. Now that assumption is being seriously questioned and this seems to be linked with the government's increased awareness of the growing extent of faculty involvement in outside professional activities.

The dilemma arising from the benefits and the problems associated with outside professional activities is clearly a complex one. Despite the significant benefits I outlined initially, there are undoubtedly grounds for the claims that have been made that conflicts of interest, economic self-serving, and shortchanging of academic duties have also resulted from

outside activities.

Any examination of concerns related to faculty consulting and other professional activities for supplemental pay points up the mixed and sometimes conflicting expectations faced by the academic professional. While an entrepreneurial approach to one's profession may be understood as faculty salary increases lag behind the rise in the cost of living, the broader view of the problems created by the present faculty role definition suggests that more than individual attempts to supplement salaries are needed. Furthermore, the valuable contributions that academic professionals can make outside the university should not be tarnished by the negative aspects inherent in the delivery system provided by current university policy for their expertise.

Universities, students, professional colleagues, and segments of society demand accountability for a range of professional commitments that are not equally well defined within the construct of the faculty position. The current concept of a faculty position makes provision for serving all of these clients but not in a way that prevents suspicion of conflicts of interest and loss of objectivity. If professional activities that now take place outside the university's purview are really contributing to professional development and advancing the aims of higher education, ethical conflicts should not continue to be at issue in the fulfillment of these responsibilities. If, on the other hand, faculty members participate in outside activities that cannot be justified within a broadened concept of a university-employed academic professional, such activities should be curtailed.

The Ethical and Economic Issues Project, among others examining these problems, is seeking to develop new models for faculty appointments that could establish a better relationship between the academic professional and the various clienteles that are dependent upon academic talents. Changes are needed in order to ensure faculty behavior that is in keeping with the professional obligations appropriate to a scholar, researcher, and teacher. Such changes must naturally include provision of adequate compensation for high-caliber academic professionals. Academicians do not benefit from the loss of credibility

resulting from lack of current role definitions, and they could unquestionably serve their various clients better if conflicting expectations for the use of their expertise were satisfactorily resolved.

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